HARAMBEE FLAME

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H.A.C.O. MEETS WITH JOURNALISTS

On October 19th. and November 2nd. the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization conducted programs on the topic of the role of American-born Afrikans in the news media. Several American-born Afrikan reporters and newscasters joined us in these sessions, as did others of our Brothers and Sisters from the Black communities in Omaha and Lincoln.

Among the subject areas discussed were: whether American-born Afrikans in the media saw themselves as primarily accountable to their employers or to their Black communities, the role that White racism plays in hiring and promotions, the contradiction between the American-born Afrikan's responsibility and desire to provide his community and the public generally with accurate and valid insight into events of the day and the racial and political biases of station or newspaper management, etc.

We were very encouraged by the spirit and attitudes of the reporters and newscasters who met with us. We were encouraged by their enthusiasm and willingness to listen to the numerous concerns expressed and their apparent readiness to sharpen their impact, in a positive way, upon the consciousness of American-born Afrikan people.

It cannot be stressed too much how important our Brothers and Sisters in the news media are to us. It is through the information we get through newspapers, radio, and television that we are enabled to shape our perspective of the world. And it is through such a perspective that we obtain much in the way of how we view ourselves.

Unfortunately, much of what we believe about the world and our place in it is false or twisted. It is so because of a systemic conflict of interests between the political/economic structure of power in the U.S. and that vast majority of us who fall outside that structure. Because of the amounts of money required to operate daily newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations, it is primarily those who are in the U.S. structure of power who own the means of communication and make the basic decisions as to their functions.

It is because of the above that, for example, we never hear or see the basic power relationships in this society questioned by the Establishment print or electronic media. It is because of the above that we see and hear of violent actions undertaken by groups or countries opposed to the U.S. as "terrorism" while we rarely, if ever, see or hear of such actions undertaken by pro-U.S. groups or countries as being referred to by the Establishment media in such negative terms. The Establishment media are generally controlled by White males of very high incomes, and what is called "objective" reporting by these media reflects th racist attitudes, middle-of-the-road-to-right-wing political and economic attitudes, and sexist traits by these White males.

Our need, then, is to undertake efforts to establish our own non-commercial and community owned and controlled means of communications. In lieu of establishment of these enterprises, American-born Afrikan people in the commercial media must make every effort, through their own research and vigilance and subsequent delivery of news, to combat the harmful effects(upon the minds and psyches of American-born Afrikan people) of generally biased and self-serving(to owners and management) of Establishment journalism.

-editor

RELIGION: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

(This article has been edited down due to space limitations.)

Whether a person is Baptist, Catholic, Muslim, or of any of the many other religious disciplines, he or she tends to accept the doctrines of his or her religion as absolute truth. But the concept of "truth" is so abstract that it is quite hard to define. Webster's Dictionary defines truth as: "of being true; specific, conformity with fact."

The more we learn, the more we realize how little we really know. An important thing that we should all learn is that the one absolute truth with which our minds are capable of dealing at this time is that there is no such thing as absolute truth.

The Guinness World Book of Records is full of accounts of phenomena that defy many long-held, so-called "truths." An East Indian Yogi defies truth by controlling his heart rate, breathing, etc. Hypnotists defy truth by having their subjects so intently think that they are holding hot coal so that their hands actually blister. Christopher Columbus defied this truth by showing that the world was not flat.

Did man create God? Did God create man? Consider Western culture. Although there were apparently no portraits made of Jesus during his lifetime, still most Christians in this culture would insist that Jesus was white. However, judging from the geographic location where Jesus was born and the time, it is unlikely that Jesus could have been other than Semitic-featured and dark-complected. The apparently false portrayal of Jesus as a white man is very important because, since he is also portrayed as being the Son of God, white people are readily enabled to identify with this Son of God while non-white people must contend with the feelings of inferiority that come with their realization that they "aren't the color of God."

Since in this culture and in many others males have traditionally been dominant, God is typically spoken of as being a man..."God the Father," "He," etc. Yet God is given credit for creating life, for bringing life to the world. Who is it in our world who brings life to the world? Is it not the female? Why do we not, then, refer to God in primarily feminine terms?

Organized religion exploits, oppresses, and institutes racism and sexism. Religion preys upon the emotions of the weak, the poor, and the ignorant. It is a means of keeping the so-called "minorities" docile and passive, clinging to the hope of receiving their rewards after death, while the ruling classes reap the fruits of everyday life.

A plane carrying 200 people crashes. 199 people die. The survivor praises God, thanks God for saving his or her life. But if God can be thanked for reaching down and saving one life, then why shouldn't this God be cursed for allowing the death of the other 199 people.

We can escape this madness that organized religion teaches us by first trying to stand on our own two feet (barring any handicaps). If we need support, let's reach inside of ourselves for that strength we have in reserve.

Secondly, let's quit trying to have God shoulder our responsibilities. If we get a job, it's because we were looking for one and one was available, not because a god answered prayers. Isn't it possible that God's responsibility is to keep the vast universe in order? God has bestowed upon us a very special gift, one which will enable us to deal with all of life's problems. And that gift is our minds.

Finally, if there is a greatest sin, would it not be that of failing to put this most wondrous gift to use?

-Al L. Holloway

FROM OTHER SOURCES

NAT'L BLACK INDEPENDENT PARTY:

"Since the founding convention last November, membership in the party has grown tremendously, according to party officials. Officials say NBIPP has now some 3000 members, and 58 chapters in 21 cities and 27 states. NBIPP's base currently lies in Black communities in the smaller and rural cities in the Midwest, South, and Northeast, while it has less of a presence in the Black communities in the larger, urban cities.

"NBIPP's leadership and membership is broad and diverse, reflecting the numerous political tendencies that exist within the Black community. Party members and leaders include communists, social democrats, ministers, nationalists, professionals, and former members of the Democratic and Republican parties.

"'The Nat'l Black Independent Political Party aims to attain power to radically transform the present socio-economic order, that is, to achieve self-determination and social and political freedom for the masses of Black people,' says the NBIPP platform. 'Therefore, our party will actively oppose racism, imperialism, sexual oppression, and capitalist exploitation.'

"On electoral politics, the platform states that 'the party must define our attitude toward the Democratic and Republican parties. We should observe that both the Democrats and Republicans are serving only the interests of the ruling class; therefore, they are diametrically opposed to the interests of African and poor people.'"

-The above excerpts were taken from the Oct. 28, 1981 issue of THE GUARDIAN. Emphasis added.

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TAKING POSITIONS

"....Black people concerned about survival, which is hinged upon very unstable footing, should be aware of the fork-tongued liberal and challenge any authority calling for them to destroy themselves. It is not the same as taking sides when government leaders tell them it is time to send arms and carry out war preparations in Sudan to keep out Libyans when there are enough similarities in Black Americans to realize they all represent a common ancestry. A common ancestry just as sure as it is with the people in Angola still being attacked by racist South Africa while the American government remains the sole defense in the world of such brutality.

"Although the government admits that Egypt has been controlled by a dictator and most of its citizens have no civil rights or opportunity or human or human resources, it has taken a position of determination for destroying efforts of Libya's Moammar Khadafy in assisting Third World struggles there and throughout Africa. Khadafy finances less fortunate African countries with arms against aggression and imperialism, but Former President Jerry Ford calls him "a bully" who "in my judgement is a cancer on that part of the globe." Then former President Jimmy Carter reverts to a familiar description more in line with his brother's speaking toward Blacks by saying Khadafy is "in some ways subhuman." The world over knows whites nor any other imperialist will not rest with Blacks in control of their own destiny. The question is whether Black people will aid in the defeat of Black regimes."

-The above passages were excerpted from the Oct. 15, 1981 issue of ST. LOUIS ARGUS. Emphasis added.

The HARAMBEE FLAME is published monthly by the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization. We encourage you to share your ideas with us. Send articles to: Editor/David L. Rice; H.A.C.O.; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, Neb.; 68502

A WOMAN SPEAKS OF LOVE

LOVE IS UNIVERSAL
LIKE COLORS OF OUR SKINS
IT SURE AS HELL HAS TO
COME FROM WITHIN

LIKE BIRDS OF CERTAIN BEAUTY
PICTURE BEAUTIFUL
CAN'T YOU SEE
JUST THINK SUCH A WORD MEANS
JOY AND TRANQUILITY

LIKE ALL LIVING THINGS
AND MAN BEING THE PRIZE
OF ALL GOD'S CREATION
WHAT GIVES US THE RIGHT
TO TRY AND FORSAKE IT

SENSITIVE, INTRICATE, MINOR, MAJOR
SOUNDS LIKE MUSIC OR
MAYBE JUST BRAILLE
EXPLAINS THIS WORD L-O-V-E
IN PERFECT DETAIL.

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BUT I'M NOT MAD

I'm not mad
to see
my brothers...
my sisters...
struggle within a system designed
to work against
instead of with them,
it's a maze...

I'm not mad
to hear
my brothers...
my sisters...
cry,
beg,
fight,
submit
their resolutions...
fall directly upon
deaf political ears

I'm not mad
to feel
the changes...
from bad-to-worse
from worse-to-bad,
never exceeding...
the boundaries of bad,
I realize what must be done,
but I'm not mad...
I'm angry!

-Jimi Wayne

LOOKING FOR PLACES TO SEND YOUR STUFF TO?

Below is a listing of a few publications seeking submissions of poetry and other creative writing.

*INSIDE/OUT(GPO Box 1185; N.Y., N.Y.; 10016)

*JOINT CONFERENCE(P.O. Box 19332; Washington, D.C.; 20036)

*KITE(Box 229; 2483 Hearst Ave.; Berkeley, Calif.; 94709)

OVERTONE SERIES(4421 Chestnut St.; Philadelphia, PA.; 19104)

XAVIER REVIEW(Dept. of English, Xavier U.; New Orleans, LA.; 70125)

POET LORE(Heldref Publications; 4000 Albemarle St., N.W.; Washington, D.C.; 20016)

TESSERACT(132 Crosby St., 11th. fl.; N.Y., N.Y.; 10012)

*These publications seek submissions primarily from prisoners.